

GOVOC-97

Emergency Care For The Homeless

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CITY OF BOSTON
DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL DEFENSE

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Emergency Care for the Homeless

CITY OF BOSTON DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL DEFENSE

SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION

(Civilian War Aid)

The Social Services Division of City of Boston Civil Defense is set up to care for the uninjured victims of enemy attack or other similar disaster. Its task is to house the homeless; feed the hungry; clothe those in immediate need; give temporary financial aid; give information and counsel to the distressed; maintain a central record of casualties and of locations of those who have left their homes; provide for welfare aspects of any organized evacuation; and help restore people to normal living through rehabilitation.

EMERGENCY WELFARE CENTERS

In case of enemy attack, the Social Services Division will immediately open Emergency Welfare Centers for the care of uninjured victims who are in need of housing or other emergency welfare services as a result of the disaster.

What is an Emergency Welfare Center?

An Emergency Welfare Center is a group of buildings in the same general area of the city, to be used for the temporary housing of groups of uninjured victims of a disaster. Such a Center may temporarily house from 500 to 10,000 people, depending on the capacity of the building.

The headquarters building of the Center will usually be a school; other buildings will be churches, halls, other schools, and any other buildings which have space for housing people temporarily. Senior high schools will not be used since they are reserved for medical purposes. The Medical and Health Division also has priority in use of other buildings.

Each Emergency Welfare Center will provide, in addition to temporary housing, all disaster emergency services, such as feeding; clothing; temporary financial aid; information, referral, and counseling; and assistance in rehousing. Some of these services will be located only in the central building, while some of the other buildings will be used only for housing.

Those Centers in areas of the city not seriously affected by enemy action will be of service not only to people who have come from the disaster area, but also to people from the Center neighborhood who seek information and help with problems arising out of the disaster.

Emergency Welfare Center buildings which are close to the disaster area may be operated by the Social Services Division as Collecting Stations.

The successful operation of Emergency Welfare Centers and of Collecting Stations is essential to the dual objectives of Civil Defense; namely, the minimizing of human suffering and the maintenance of public order.

How many Emergency Welfare Centers will there be?

Boston has designated approximately 100 groups of buildings to serve as Emergency Welfare Centers. These are located in every Civil Defense district of the city. A few districts have only one or two Emergency Welfare Centers, while larger districts have as many as ten such Center groups of buildings.

The number of these Emergency Welfare Centers which will operate immediately after a disaster will be determined by the location and extent of the disaster, and by the number of people affected.

How do people get to an Emergency Welfare Center?

Persons coming out of the attack area will be directed by police, wardens, and others to elementary schools, churches, public buildings, or other suitable places of assembly. From these Collecting Stations people will move to the Emergency Welfare Centers. Transportation will be provided as necessary.

Persons from outside the immediate disaster area, whose homes are temporarily uninhabitable, and persons temporarily prevented from reaching their own homes will be directed either to Collecting Stations or to Emergency Welfare Centers.

When is an Emergency Welfare Center opened?

In case of disaster in or near Boston, Emergency Welfare Centers will be opened at the earliest possible moment after the area of disaster is known. All Center personnel will report to previously designated posts if possible. Personnel assigned to a Center which is found to be in the area from which people are being moved will report to those Centers nearest their assigned posts but outside that area.

What are the personnel needs of an Emergency Welfare Center?

An Emergency Welfare Center is managed by a Center Manager and two Assistant Center Managers. Center Managers are responsible for the entire group of buildings in the Center and for coordinating all the services in the Center. Individual buildings in the group will also have their own building managers, assistants, and, where possible, custodial or maintenance personnel.

Located in the Emergency Welfare Centers will be information and counseling teams; financial aid teams; clothing distribution teams; food preparation teams; evacuation welfare personnel; registration teams; and rehousing personnel.

Other personnel will assist as spiritual advisers, in the care of children and the handicapped, in clerical work, custodial care and maintenance of buildings, keeping stores and supplies, messenger service, nursing and first aid, recreation, and in other services necessary to the operation of the Center buildings and the care of Center occupants.

Who mans an Emergency Welfare Center?

In the manning of Emergency Welfare Centers, as in all its planning and operating phases, the Social Services Division of the Boston Civil Defense utilizes the personnel of the Department of Public Welfare of the City of Boston, the Boston Metropolitan Chapter of Red Cross, and United Community Services of Metropolitan Boston with nearly 400 member agencies. It also fully mobilizes for Emergency Welfare Centers the personnel of public and parochial schools; and it turns to individuals and groups such as churches, colleges, business, labor, clubs, and other organizations for the varied skills and services necessary to Center operation.

A full listing of resources in personnel cannot be made here. Following are examples of how Boston will staff its Emergency Welfare Centers:

All Boston public school teachers, custodians, and other school personnel will serve in various capacities in the operation of school buildings as parts of an Emergency Welfare Center. Home economics and school lunch personnel will supervise food preparation on school premises. School and Health Department nurses will give nursing and health services. Parochial school teachers and other parochial school personnel will similarly serve in various capacities in operating parochial school buildings as parts of the Emergency Welfare Center.

When church buildings, neighborhood houses, and youth agency buildings are operated as parts of Centers, these will be staffed, as far as possible, by personnel of their respective organizations.

Information and counseling teams in the Centers are made up of social workers from the voluntary social agencies, librarians, college faculty members, and other qualified persons. Financial Aid teams include Public Welfare Department workers. Child Welfare workers will be in Centers to work with problems of children separated from their families. Recreation and group workers will aid in various services to Center occupants. Members of the clergy will act as spiritual advisers. Men and women from the Center neighborhood may assist with tasks as varied as Center administration, clerical work, clothing distribution or building repair. Many forms of help can be given by the Center occupants themselves.

Special resources of the area around a Center are also mobilized for service to the Center. For example, owners, managers, and workers in nearly 1,000 restaurants stand ready to assist in the feeding of Center occupants and other persons affected by disaster.

Methods of operating an Emergency Welfare Center, and duties of personnel are set forth in detail in other publications of the Social Services Division.